

Monthly Update – May 2014

Tanzania Agriculture Productivity Program

OVERVIEW

USAID-TAPP is increasing incomes for smallholder farmers, improving nutrition, and expanding markets through agricultural innovation and commercialization. The program is part of Feed the Future, the US government's global hunger and food security initiative to break the cycle of hunger and poverty in the developing world. Feed the Future is focusing on the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor (SAGCOT), a region the Tanzanian government has identified as the most conducive for agricultural growth. Working with partners and the government of Tanzania, USAID-TAPP is concentrating efforts on selected crops and regions to help transform the country's food security.

INTERNATIONAL EXPERT BUILDS CAPACITY THROUGH AGRICULTURE TRAINING

Earlier this month, USAID-TAPP conducted a series of seminars and field trainings to agronomists, government extension officers, and students from horticulture institutes in Kilimanjaro, Manyara, Morogoro, and Arusha. The training was part of USAID-TAPP's effort to increase the knowledge and capacity of government extension officers, and prepare the new generation of students working in agriculture. Ricardo Lardizabal, a highly recognized horticulture expert, and a senior production manager for Fintrac Inc. has been the lead trainer on irrigation, crop protection, and good agricultural practices (GAPs).

"This training has been very helpful in our practical studies as we get to learn new and proper ways to install modern farming equipment," said Moses Anney, an agronomy student from Horti Tengeru.

The seminar trained participants on irrigation techniques, including the proper installation of equipment and the adoption of GAPs. The Horti Tengeru students learned about the proper fitting of the equipment, specifically for drip irrigation lines, pumps, and filters. Over 35 extension officers from eight districts and 60 students from Horti Tengeru participated in the training. The event was part of a broader effort by USAID-TAPP to transfer knowledge and increase awareness of new technologies not being taught at the agriculture institutes in Tanzania. The experience exposed the students and the extension officers to examples of effective equipment and practices currently being used on modern, highly productive farms.



Photo by Fintrac Inc
Students and extension officers installing a drip irrigation system during the "learning by doing" field training at Horti Tengeru.

SHALLOW WELLS AND RESERVOIRS BOOST PRODUCTION

USAID-TAPP continues to support smallholder farmers in establishing infrastructure for managing insufficient water supply. The construction of reservoirs and wells are boosting production and encouraging farmers to engage in the cultivation of horticulture crops to improve their incomes.

Construction and installation has been approved for 14 reservoirs on 13 different sites, with sizes ranging from 200 to 450 cubic meters. Most sites will receive a daily replenishment from a low-flow source. Reservoirs are expected to play a major role in increasing the availability of water for irrigation the southern highlands and the northern zone.

Previously identified opportunities for large investments include farms in Engaruka, Selela, and Old Onyosambo near Arusha. Cemented canals will be constructed to retain and distribute additional water from the springs. As a result,

nearly all water from the spring will be captured and utilized, while ensuring areas under the drip replication initiative reduce water waste. With the availability of water from the reservoirs and wells, the farmer groups are shifting from rain-fed production to irrigation farming, enabling them to grow throughout the year.

In the central zone, 10 shallow wells have been completed this month. Construction was commissioned at nine sites, of which four sites have been completed; technicians have reported a recharge/flow rate of 6,000 L/hr, a figure corroborated by USAID-TAPP agronomists.

USAID-TAPP is moving forward with the contracting of the Southern Highlands Participatory Organization (SHIPO) to implement phase one of well construction activities for farmers served by agronomist posts outside the central zone. The agreement will provide assurance that construction maintains uniform quality and safety standards, as well as strengthens the capacity of locally-based technicians to affordably continue construction at these standards under direct contract with USAID-TAPP. In the coming months, the initiative will result in the construction of 65 water points by SHIPO.

OFSP RECIPES DIVERSIFY COOKING OPTIONS

In May, USAID-TAPP nutrition specialist Alice Mwambambale conducted a training with the Imani women's group in Moshi on new ways to prepare meals using orange flesh sweet potato (OFSP).



Photo by Fintrac Inc

A USAID-TAPP nutrition specialist demonstrates how to make dough for hard chapati using OFSP.

At the demonstration, farmers learned new methods of cooking with hard chapati and making juice by using OFSP. The recipes exposed the farmers—who were not previously familiar with the dishes—to new, practical recipes for household cooking.

“It wasn’t clicking in my mind that OFSP tubers can be used to extract juice and make chapati. The juice is so palatable and sweet. As a mother I am so glad to gain this kind of useful knowledge—it will help me to prepare different foods for my family and ensure that we all consume and never miss vitamin A in our daily meals,” said Consolata Reuben, a farmer participating in the training.

OFSP can be used in different food dishes for family consumption as well as a source of income generation. The tuber provides a valuable source of vitamin A, vitamin C, and iron which are commonly found to be deficient in children.

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“Increased food security through enhanced productivity”

USAID-TAPP is a five-year program implemented by Fintrac Inc. to increase smallholder farmer incomes through enhanced productivity, crop diversification, and improved market access. Visit www.tanzania-agric.org for more information on upcoming activities and to receive copies of monthly bulletins and success stories.

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